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Indigenizing America through Music: Francis La Flesche's Campaign for American National Music

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Introduction

In the obituary of the Omaha ethnologist Francis La Flesche, Hartley B. Alexander, a philosopher and anthropologist at Scripps College praised La Flesche's lifetime of work on Omaha and Osage Indians for "possess[ing] an especial value, not only as being the work of a racially native American, but also [...] the mind of the observer [...] gifted with an acuteness of understanding and a gift of imaginative sympathy which made him a leader among our interpreters of Indian thinking."[1] Alexander's description of La Flesche as "a leader among our interpreters of Indian thinking" seems supported by La Flesche's self-portrait, which showed him wearing a buffalo robe over his naked chest. Alexander presumably wanted to enhance for readers La Flesche's "primitive" Indianness, as demonstrated how he was a "racially native American" who could tell "authentic" information about American Indian cultures.

Dead, La Flesche obviously could not control his own representation in his obituary. As the matter of fact, La Flesche's obituary portrait was deliberately retouched to fit Alexander's expectations about American Indians.[2] In the original picture, La Flesche had in fact posed in a suit with a bow-tie, wearing a

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1. Hartley B. Alexander, "Francis La Flesche," *American Anthropologist* 35, no. 2 (April-June 1933): 330.

2. Francis La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World: From the Works of Francis La Flesche*, ed. Garrick A. Bailey (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 14; Sherry L. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," *American Indian Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 598.

buffalo robe over his white dress shirt. Although the clothes indicative of Euro-American civilization were erased from the picture of his obituary, La Flesche had purposefully worn "civilized" clothes underneath the buffalo robe, showing his whiteness and Indianness at the same time. The original portrait thus represents La Flesche's ability not only to cross imaginary cultural boundaries between Euro-Americans and American Indians but also to complicate them. Furthermore, by wearing Indianness over whiteness, La Flesche's picture demonstrates his ability to indigenize Euro-America while it also attempted to make him fit into the Euro-Americans' expectation about American Indians at the turn of the twentieth century.

La Flesche's ability to cross imaginary boundaries is largely the result of his background as a son of Omaha chief, who encouraged fellow Indians to adapt to Euro-American way of life as necessary for their survival.[3] As an Omaha boy, La Flesche, spoke the Omaha language at home and attended Omaha rituals, and was planning to become a buffalo hunter.[4] However, in response to the changes of Omaha life, La Flesche followed his father's wishes and went to the Presbyterian mission school to learn "English, Christianity, and the moral superiority of a clean life of honest labor."[5] His bilingual skills of speaking and writing in both Omaha and English probably helped him to get a government job after his

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3. This way of Omaha Indians' adapting Euro-American ways of life while maintaining their traditions has similarities to the concept of "selective acculturation," an idea that Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut introduced to examine the process of assimilation of immigrant groups (particularly those in the second generation), who accommodate to certain cultural customs from the dominant culture while retaining their own ethnic culture. This essay, however, uses the rhetoric of "survivance," a concept that Gerald Vizenor introduced to express the survival and resistance of American Indians countering "dominance, tragedy, and victimry" imposed on American Indians by the dominant culture. I suggest in this essay that La Flesche wore the mask of a "civilized" Indian to play with Euro-American expectations (thus, the "simulation of survivance") to illuminate American Indians' contribution to American culture. For further explanation about "selective acculturation," see Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* 3rd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 267−271. For further information about "survivance," refer to Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), vii, 5. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for pointing out the "selective acculturation" concept and its relevance to this essay.

4. La Flesche recalled it when he received Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Nebraska in 1926. Also, it is suggestive that around this time he became familiar with Omaha music through his participation in Omaha rituals. Jarold Ramsey, "Francis LaFlesche's 'The Song of Flying Crow' and the Limits of Ethnography," *boundary 2* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 1992): 181; Norma Kidd Green, *Iron Eye's Family: The Children of Joseph La Flesche* (Lincoln: Johnson Publishing Co., 1969), 196; Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 583.

mission school education. In 1881 La Flesche was appointed as a clerk in the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington DC, where he also studied and obtained a law degree at National University in 1893.[6] By then he was in close association with an American woman ethnologist named Alice C. Fletcher whose researches included Omaha Indians, and eventually they collaborated together to publish *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* (1893) and *The Omaha Tribe* (1911). Whether or not their relationship helped him to get a position at the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1910, La Flesche utilized the access and knowledge he had as a son of an Omaha chief, and he eventually won distinction as one of the first American Indian ethnologist.[7] As a result of following his father's belief in civilization, La Flesche could interpret traditional and evolving Omaha culture and who was also familiar with Euro-American lifestyles. As such a cross-cultural figure La Flesche is perhaps best represented by his funeral services that "included Omaha traditional feast and Masonic services."[8]

This background of learning and seemingly preferring "white" ways over the traditional life of Omaha Indians, however, led some observers to claim that La Flesche was a passive "assimilationist" or heavily injured by living between two worlds. Michael Coleman, for example, in his analysis of La Flesche's school life makes this statement: "I was disappointed in La Flesche the pupil. He should have resisted the missionary contempt for the Omaha culture characteristic of these decades of assimilationist education."[9] The question here is not whether La Flesche could really challenge the education that missionaries imposed. Yet by considering La Flesche merely a passive receiver of an assimilationist education, Coleman misses the point that La Flesche, as a mature writer, skillfully played with the notion of civilization. In his autobiography of the life at the boarding school, *The Middle Five*, he "resisted" notions of Euro-American superiority. Sherry L. Smith, drawing from the comparison between La Flesche's relationship to his Omaha family and his Euro-American acquaintances, concluded that La Flesche chose to live among white Americans to insist on the "essential humanity" of American Indians and the "value and complexities of their cultures" and to fight against assumptions about American Indian inferiority and Euro-

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5. Tsianina K. Lomawaima, *They Called it Prairie Light: The Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 2.

6. Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 190.

7. Ibid.

8. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 598.

9. Michael Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850–1930* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), ix cited in Ernest Stromberg ed., *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance: Word Medicine, Word Magic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 101.

American superiority.[10] Smith successfully reveals La Flesche's strategy to communicate with mainstream Americans. However, by observing La Flesche as "a man who was severely wounded by the difficulties inherent in living between two worlds," Smith seems to create an image of La Flesche falling into depression, the tragic victim of colonialism which forced him to choose "white" ways, and paying a high price by severing his relationship with his family.[11]

Rather than reducing La Flesche as a pro-assimilationist or a passive victim of colonialism, recent critics have reevaluated the rhetoric La Flesche used in his writings and sees him as one of the Native intellectuals who practiced a "rhetoric of survivance." For example, Ernest Stromberg considers La Flesche a figure who actively negotiated the imaginary border between Euro-Americans and American Indians, embroidering his criticism in his irony, but without "offending and alienating a mainly white audience."[12] Amelia V. Katanski also shows how La Flesche represented syncretic repertoires of identities that the Omaha schoolboys practiced in accordance to the situation and contexts they were in—at school and at home.[13] In so doing, she reassesses La Flesche as a rhetorician who flexibly moves across the border, creating a middle ground in the boarding school narrative that was supposed to tell about Omaha childrens' successful assimilation. By revealing the rhetoric La Flesche employed in *The Middle Five*, both Stromberg and Katanski reconstructed La Flesche as a figure who actively countered Euro-American imposition of what it meant to be an Indian, reclaiming his version of Indianness through an autobiography in English that demonstrated a way to survive and resist in mainstream American society.

La Flesche's works, as one of the first American Indian ethnologist in his generation, were not limited to his boarding school narrative. Throughout his lifetime, he strenuously engaged in research on Omaha and Osage Indians, and especially collaborated with American composers who sought a new sound and vocabulary for American national music. Following the current reevaluation of La Flesche, this essay thus revisits his writings in relation to his personal life and his career as an ethnologist, and delineates him as an active agent in complicating the cultural border between American Indians and Euro-Americans. It will delineate the way La Flesche crafted Indianness in response to dominant expectations of American Indians at the turn of the twentieth century, and argue that La Flesche played a "civilized" Indian to prove his readers the common humanity that American Indians share with mainstream Americans, and to point out the counterfeit virtue of Euro-Americans to challenge their superiority.

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10. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 598.

11. Ibid., 582.

12. Stromberg, *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance*, 9.

13. Amelia V. Katanski, *Learning to Write "Indian"* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 95−113.

Furthermore, he demonstrated what contributions American Indians can make to American culture. This essay will especially highlight his contributions in the field of American music, in which La Flesche played with his collaborator's craving for "authenticity" and situated his Indians as a vital component of "American-ness." As an Indian ethnologist La Flesche provided non-Indian composers access, knowledge, and "authenticity." At the same time, however, he also placed American Indians at the center of American identity. By illuminating La Flesche's involvement in constructing American national music, I wish to illustrate what Gerald Vizenor calls "survivance." La Flesche complicates the notion of "dominance, tragedy, and victimry" imposed on American Indians by the dominant culture because he manipulated Euro-American stereotypes and expectations, narrating his own version of Indianness and Americanness to a wide audience.[14]

I: Playing a "Civilized" Indian to Talk Back to "Civilization"

In order to understand La Flesche's ability to complicate the supposed cultural boundary, it is first necessary to learn how he grew up as an Omaha youth. La Flesche was born in 1857 on an Omaha reservation located in northern Nebraska, as the son of mixed-blood father Joseph La Flesche (E-sta-ma-za) and his Omaha wife, Ta-in-ne.[15] La Flesche was born when Omaha Indians were gradually ceding their hunting grounds to the U.S. government, and beginning to adapt to Euro-American ways of living.[16] His father, Joseph who later became a chief among the Omaha Indians, conformed to Euro-American civilization by "favor[ing] education, desir[ing] to adopt the customs of whites, and go[ing] to farming."[17] Maintaining old ways, Joseph believed, the Omaha Indians would eventually be exterminated.[18] While some Omaha resisted his progressive idea, Joseph led half of his people to convert to Christianity, and build a new village

14. Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, vii.

15. Joseph La Flesche or E-sta-ma-za had a French father and Ponca mother, but he was later adopted by Omaha chief Big Elk, and spent most of his life as an Omaha. Francis La Flesche's mother, Ta-in-ne was the second wife of Joseph, and Sherry Smith observes that Joseph started to act distant from Ta-in-ne and their children after his conversion to Christianity whose missionaries were against his polygamy. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 583.

16. Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe* (1911; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 2: 622–625.

17. "E-sta-ma-za, or Joseph La Flesche" in Fannie Reed Giffen, *Oo-Mah-Ha Ta-Wa-Tha (Omaha City) 1858–1898* (Lincoln: Press of F.B. Festner, Omaha, 1898), 30.

18. According to Giffen, Joseph La Flesche often said: "It is either civilization or extermination," and future existence of Omaha Indians were depended on one of either choice, and Joseph took "civilization" as a choice. Ibid., 31.

with frame houses instead of earth lodges. They also plowed fenced fields instead of hunting buffaloes, and sent their children to the Omaha Reservation School run by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church.[19] La Flesche entered this mission school when he reached five or six, and studied English and the Bible among other Omaha children to learn Euro-American ways of lives. It was also where he developed his skills to play with expectations about Indians, and he learned the rhetoric to survive and resist Euro-American dominance.

Living at the turn of the twentieth century and learning at the boarding school, La Flesche was aware of the stereotypes that mainstream Americans constructed about American Indians. Mainstream Americans thought that Indians were left with only two choices for the future: extinction or assimilation. The Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 seemed to represent the possibility of extinction as the last of military conquest of American Indians. The Dawes Act of 1887 and the boarding schools built for Native children, on the other hand, suggested possible assimilation. The Dawes Act, also known as the General Allotment Act, aimed to allot communal lands on the reservations to Native individuals as private property, with a promise of eventually granting them American citizenship.[20] Off-reservation boarding schools aimed to remove American Indian children from their families and communities to make them learn "proper arts, language, literature, and labor of the American citizenry."[21] Both attempts at Indian assimilation intended to Americanize Indians under the instruction of the supposedly more "superior" whites.[22] Heavily influenced by Social Darwinist notions during this period, Euro-Americans assumed Indians were "inferior," and that in the face of "superior" whites, Indians were doomed to vanish, whether through defeat or assimilation to Euro-American civilization.

The turn of the twentieth century was also when mainstream Americans romanticized the Indian.[23] Living in a rapidly modernizing society, Euro-Americans began idealizing Indianness as a "primitive" other who could provide "authentic reality" to their overcivilized urban lives.[24] Dime novels, Buffalo

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19. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 583.

20. This policy promised all allottees American citizenship within twenty five years if they cultivate their allotted land as farmers. Its primary goals were to dismantle American Indian tribes by breaking up communal lands, under the name of giving American Indians opportunities to "receive the benefit of civilization and to protect their remaining landholding." Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, *American Indian Education: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 82. See 80−83 of the same book for further references to the Dawes Act.

21. John W. Troutman, *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879−1934* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 7.

22. Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880−1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984; 2001), 210.

Bill's Wild West Show, theatrical performances including Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, the Boy Scouts of America and the Camp Fire Girls, or advertisements to attract tourists to the American West all celebrated these imaginary Indians and their counterparts—cowboys, cowgirls and the landscape of Western wilderness. A series of photographs taken by Edward Curtis or oil paintings by George Catlin, for example, portrayed those "vanishing" Indians in a fixed posture, beautifully staged to preserve "exotic" Indianness that was seemingly "vanishing" in the face of modernity.[25] Moreover, anthropologists like Alice Fletcher, Francis Densmore, and George Grinnell sought to collect these "raw" materials of American Indian cultures before they were gone. While actual American Indians were expected to choose either the path of assimilation or extinction, these imaginary American Indians as a romantic representation of people's bygone Western legacy, on the other hand, blossomed and captivated the minds of mainstream Americans at the turn of the twentieth century.

Having grown up in such a context, La Flesche first presented himself as a "civilized" Indian who successfully conformed for mainstream audiences to Euro-American ways of life because he knew the necessity of convincing his readers that he was in fact the same human being, and that his opinions were trustworthy.[26] Believing that every human being, regardless of race, has a share in common human nature, he dedicated his autobiography to "the Universal Boy."[27] However, to claim its common human nature, he knew that Indians needed to change their appearance to get a fair judgment from mainstream audiences. In his

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23. For instances of Euro-Americans' construction and romanticization of Indianness, see Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); S. Elizabeth Bird ed., *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998); Sherry L. Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes, 1880–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

24. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 74; T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880–1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 4–5.

25. Alan Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880–1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 13–16.

26. It is not my intention to generalize the reactions of American Indians to these Euro-centered expectations that were imposed on them, just by taking La Flesche as an example. Rather, I would like to note that La Flesche, who was born when Omaha Indian life was already transforming, and who graduated from a boarding school and later college, had excellent foresight to presume what was expected of him, and he could strategically use it to push his agenda and his authority to speak as an Indian and for American Indians.

27. Francis La Flesche, *The Middle Five: Indian Schoolboys of the Omaha Tribe* (1900; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), v.

Fig 1. Portrait of Francis La Flesche, n.d. National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution [NAA MS 4558]

autobiography, La Flesche clearly states that "The paint, feathers, robes, and other articles that make up the dress of the Indian, are the marks of savagery to the European, and he who wears them[...] finds it difficult to lay claim to a share in common human nature," pointing out that American Indians' different and "exotic" appearance in fact served as the marker of "savagery" and "inferiority."[28] La Flesche thus suggests that wearing a school uniform would help Indian boys "to be judged, as are other boys, by what they say and do."[29] As La Flesche indicated, wearing a school uniform did not necessarily change the character of American Indians, but disguised them with a "civilized" mask. La Flesche thought that through something as simple as school uniforms American Indians could establish their credibility to talk back, because with the same outfit, they could demonstrate their equality with the majority. In a picture inserted in *The Omaha Tribe*, he poses himself in a dark suit, white shirt with a tie and a pocket watch chain looped over his vest (See Figure 1).[30] With his mustache and his hair neatly parted on the side, La Flesche's photo attracts his viewers with his gentility and civility as an upper middle-class gentleman. It appeared his conversion to Euro-American civilization was thus a success.

Yet wearing the school uniform or wearing "civilized" classy suits was not the only mask that La Flesche put on. He used school uniforms as a metaphor of the white man's education—knowledge and skills that children gain from the boarding school education. As La Flesche later claimed, getting a white man's education was a way for American Indians to have "skilled farmers, mechanics, doctors, and lawyers, as well as preachers, for the development of [Indians]."[31]

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28. Ibid., xv.

29. Ibid.

30. Fletcher and La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe*, 1:31; "Portrait of Francis La Flesche, n. d.," Photoprint. n. d. National Anthropological Archives (NAA), Smithsonian Institution [NAA MS 4558] Retrieved from *Smithsonian Institution Research Information System* (SIRIS), http://siris-archives.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?&profile=all&source=~!siarchives&uri = full=3100001~!23516~!0#focus (accessed September 19, 2014).

31. Francis La Flesche to Richard Henry Pratt. June 29, 1887. Richard Henry Pratt Papers, 1862−1924. Box 4, Folder 152, La. Yale University Archives. New Haven, CT.

By gaining skills and knowledge of mainstream America, La Flesche believed that American Indians would be able to stand equally with other races. La Flesche's boarding school education in fact led him to become one of the first American Indian ethnologists, a career which he later used to reclaim his authority over Indianness.

La Flesche did not begin his career as an ethnologist until he met Alice C. Fletcher, a white woman ethnologist and his mother by adoption. He met Fletcher while accompanying the famous lecture tour of Ponca chief Standing Bear in 1879−1880 as an interpreter.[32] This encounter with Fletcher possibly opened his career in Washington DC. In 1881 he was appointed to work in the Office of Indian Affairs, and in 1910 he was transferred to the Bureau of American Ethnology. He eventually served as a president of the Anthropological Society of Washington in 1922−23.

Not surprisingly, La Flesche's professional background and his strategic performance satisfied his white readers. Richard Henry Pratt, a founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School applauded La Flesche in his school paper, *Red Man and Helper*, where he reviewed La Flesche's autobiography as a celebratory narrative of American Indian assimilation. Pratt justified his philosophy by quoting a scene where a "crippled old woman of about seventy or eighty years" brought her "miserable, naked, little" grandson to school. The story, Pratt thought, showed how Indians should hand in their young to Euro-Americans since "old, withered, traditional" Indians can no longer take care of their children.[33] Through this narrative, Pratt confirmed his linear understanding about "the progress" of Indians, and celebrated La Flesche for seemingly agreeing with this belief. Jessie Cook, a writer of *The Outlook* magazine also celebrated La Flesche's book, claiming his life "reads like a romance."[34] She listed La Flesche's accomplishment such as becoming "a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science" and "render[ing] efficient service to the Royal Museum of Berlin, Germany, and[...] [being] an active member of societies engaged in researches among the aborigines of our country," and praised La Flesche as an outstanding Indian.[35] Like Pratt, Cook saw La Flesche as an ideal figure who had successfully moved forward in American society.

As Katanski observed, however, cautious reading of La Flesche's text might

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32. La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, 16.

33. La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, 131−132; Katanski, *Learning to Write* "*Indian*," 101.

34. Jessie W. Cook, "The Representative Indian," *The Outlook* 65 (May 5, 1900): 82; Katanski, *Learning to Write* "*Indian*," 95.

35. Cook termed La Flesche as one of "representative" Indians. By using the word "representative," Cook seems to indicate that La Flesche was a leading figure among American Indians rather than an "average" Indian, which the word "representative" also means. Cook, "The Representative Indian," 82; Katanski, *Learning to Write* "*Indian*," 95.

have disturbed Pratt, because La Flesche did not believe in complete assimilation.[36] La Flesche saw his boarding school education as a necessary tool for "survivance," but he was suspicious about the supposed superiority of Euro-American civilization. In his autobiography, La Flesche emphasizes the fact that Omaha boys were still Omaha even after they were educated, and the white man's education did not successfully devalue their Omaha culture. During their school life, they talked in the forbidden Omaha language when their teachers were not around, and they enjoyed stories passed down as Omaha oral traditions during bedtime.[37] La Flesche also inserted a scene of the boys understanding the Bible story by referring to their oral traditions.[38]

Moreover, when La Flesche got a splinter in his toe, the woman whom La Flesche called Aunt laughed at the medical treatment of the school nurse, since all the treatment that he received was to put a bit of pig-fat and bandage on his toe for about four days without changing the bandage. In his autobiography, La Flesche makes Aunt exclaim "Bah! It's nasty!," and "thr[owing] the pig-fat away as she could," and Aunt, with "the shouts of laughter" says: "Oh! This is funny! This is funny! [....] If this white woman takes as much care of the other children as she has of you, —I'm sorry for them. No children of mine should be placed under her care, —if I had any."[39] Inserting this story, La Flesche clearly ridicules Euro-Americans' presumed "superiority" over American Indians. Likewise, throughout his autobiography, La Flesche pointed out the absurdity of Euro-American civilization, critiquing the hypocrisy of Euro-American educators while he showed his pride as Omaha Indian.

By fabricating himself with his accomplishments, La Flesche talked back. La Flesche's criticism first went to the prejudices that Euro-Americans had about American Indians. He countered the mainstream idea that underestimated American Indians' "capab[ility] of thinking about themselves, [or] having sentiments like other human beings," and the fact that Indians were not "allowed a voice in the management of their personal affairs."[40] He especially noted that lack of understanding about the linguistic differences between Indian languages and English as a factor of negative perception about Indians.[41] He wrote in his autobiography that "no native American can ever cease to regret that utterances of his father have been constantly belittled when put into English, that their thoughts

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36. Katanski, *Learning to Write* "*Indian*," 99.

37. La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, 29–31.

38. Ibid., 57–64.

39. Ibid., 55.

40. Francis La Flesche to George Vaux Jr., October 14, 1916. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers. NAA, Suitland, MD. cited in La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, 11.

41. Francis La Flesche, *Who was the Medicine Man?* (1904; reprint, Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1905), 4–5.

have frequently been travestied and their native dignity obscured."[42] He pointed out "the myths, the rituals, and the legends of [American Indians]" appear as "childish or foolish," losing "both its spirit and its form" when translated in English.[43] At the boarding school, Indian students were forbidden to speak in their native language, and they were whipped if they broke the rule. Therefore, as La Flesche illustrated, "the new-comer, however socially inclined, was obliged to go about like a little dummy until he had learned to express himself in English."[44]

La Flesche's criticism also went to the hypocrisy of Euro-Americans. In his autobiography, La Flesche recalled one day when his school teacher, Gray-beard, became so vicious toward his student, and La Flesche observes that it was when he "created in [his] heart a hatred [toward Euro-Americans] that was hard to conquer," and that "lasted many, many years."[45] It happened when his new classmate, Joe, accidentally struck the teacher with a lump of earth thrown from his broken sling. Although Joe did not intend to attack his teacher, Gray-beard grabbed him and whipped his little hands until they were swollen and Joe "writhed with pain, turned blue, and lost his breath."[46] "It was a horrible sight," La Flesche recalled, describing the scene of Gray-beard, who was supposed to teach Christian virtues to children, losing all his "self-control, gritting his teeth and breathing heavily" and hitting the poor innocent child without any mercy.[47] La Flesche also brings up another earlier scene when Joe's old grandmother brought him to school. "The scene in the school-room when the naked little boy was first brought there by the old woman rose before me," La Flesche wrote, "I heard the words of the grandmother as she gave [Joe] to Gray-beard, 'I beg that he be kindly treated; that is all I ask!' And she had told [Joe] that the White-chests would be kind to him.[...] I tried to reconcile the act of Gray-beard with the teachings of the Missionaries, but I could not do so from any point of view."[48] By illustrating this terrible scene of his teacher's excessive punishment, La Flesche reveals the hypocrisy of his white teacher and shows his disbelief in the superiority of Euro-Americans.

Moreover, La Flesche critiqued mainstream Americans' perception of Indians as a fixed image of the past. By becoming an ethnographer, he stepped in the conflicted field of ethnography, a product of colonialism where the vast majority of researchers were Europeans who collected, documented, filed, and fixed the

42. La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, xv.
43. La Flesche, *Who was the Medicine Man?*, 4–5.
44. La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, xvii.
45. Ibid., 136, 138.
46. Ibid., 138.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.

image of Indians as the exotic "other."[49] However, unlike other ethnographers who wrote about American Indians as the "other," La Flesche documented and wrote about the "self."[50] La Flesche worked at the Smithsonian Institution, the national center of its ethnographic curiosity toward American Indian "other" and as an ethnologist he also documented enormous amount of indigenous artifacts including Omaha and Osage tribal rituals and songs.[51] However, he knew, from his experiences, that American Indians had to change to survive. In his published address entitled *Who was a Medicine Man?*, he addressed the present condition of American Indians somewhat pessimistically, playing upon his white audience's expectation about "vanishing" Indian culture. "[M]any of the rites and ceremonies that kept alive [true religious ideas] [...] are being forgotten in the changes that are rapidly taking place in the life of the present generation," La Flesche lamented, as he could never fully grasp the true meaning of the tribal rituals and ceremonies since they were already transforming as their encountered Euro-American civilization.[52] However, La Flesche simultaneously did not believe American Indian religious ideas would become extinct. Instead, he strongly predicted that tribal rituals and ceremonies would be kept alive in a modern setting. He continued: "[At present day,] [t]he youths who might have carried on these teachings and perhaps further developed them, are accommodating their lives to new conditions and taking up the avocations of the race dominant in the land."[53]

La Flesche admitted that "[t]he true religious ideas of the Indian will [thus] never be fully comprehended" by anyone because of adaptations. He instead pointed out that American Indians were not an unchanging object, but rather capable of adjusting to new circumstances, refining their traditions in accordance with rapidly changing conditions. Speaking before the statue of "the Medicine Man" by Cyrus Edwin Dallin, La Flesche stated: "The statue at once brings back vividly to my mind the scenes of my early youth, scenes that I shall never again see in their reality. This reopening of the past to me would never have been possible, had not your artist risen above the distorting influence of the prejudice one race is apt to feel toward another and been gifted with imagination to discern truth which underlies a strange exterior."[54] While La Flesche praised the sculptor's ability to comprehend "the character of the true Medicine Man," he simultaneously criticized the dominant prejudice about American Indians as a

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49. La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, xi.

50. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 581.

51. Ronald Walcott, "Francis La Flesche: American Indian Scholar," *Folklife Center News* 4, no. 1 (January 1981): 1, 10–11.

52. La Flesche, *Who was the Medicine Man?*, 3.

53. Ibid., 13.

54. Ibid.

static image of the past.

As a "civilized" Indian who lived in Washington DC in the early twentieth century, La Flesche surely associated with some other so-called "progressive" Indians who also demonstrated the Indians' capability of adapting to mainstream society and claim their citizenship. Therefore, it would not be so surprising that La Flesche played "civilized" Indian to show his ability to adjust to a new set of circumstances and thereby gained the means to critique preexisting stereotypes about American Indians. However, it seems that La Flesche wanted more from his performance. By playing the "civilized" Indian, and taking Indian music as his venue, La Flesche wanted to promote American Indians' formative contributions to American culture.

II: "They must be Taught Music"

In his 1900 autobiography *The Middle Five*, La Flesche recalls a day when government inspectors visited the mission school he attended. They wanted to know what the Omaha children had learned, and one of them asked the children to sing an Indian song. La Flesche depicted the scene like this:

> There was some hesitancy, but suddenly a loud clear voice close to me broke into a Victory song; before a bar was sung another voice took up the song from the beginning, as is the custom among the Indians, then the whole school fell in, and we made the room ring. We understood the song, and knew the emotion of which it was the expression. We felt, as we sang, the patriotic thrill of a victorious people who had vanquished their enemies; but the men shook their heads, and one of them said, "That's savage, that's savage! They must be taught music."[55]

Starting then, the boarding school teachers began teaching Omaha children Western songs every afternoon, and La Flesche stated with a sense of irony that "[w]e [...] enjoyed singing them *almost* [emphasis mine] as well as our own native melodies."[56]

Then only a student, La Flesche could not do anything but learn Western songs. Later as an ethnologist, "civilized" La Flesche had a means to talk back, and demonstrate the contributions American Indians could make to American society.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, "savage" American Indian songs captured the attention of American classical music composers eagerly seeking an American musical personality. Antonin Dvořák, a Bohemian nationalist composer who came to the United States to work as the director of the

55. La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, 100.
56. Ibid.

National Conservatory of Music from 1892 to 1896 triggered this development of so-called "Americanism" in art music, the search for an American musical identity apart from predominantly European influences.[57] During his stay, Dvořák learned "compositions of Gottschalk and Stephen Foster and black and native American folk music," and claimed that the American national character would come from home, "whether the inspiration for the coming folksongs of America is derived from the negro melodies, the songs of the creoles, the red man's chant, or the plaintive ditties of the homesick German or Norwegian. Undoubtedly the germs for the best of music lie hidden among all the races that are commingled in this great country."[58] Inspired by Dvořák, American composers began to look into African American and American Indian melodies, along with folk music of other ethnicities in the United States to find a new vocabulary and sound for American music. Among these composers, several so-called Indianist composers, like Arthur Farwell and Charles Wakefield Cadman, looked into American Indian melodies.[59] During the first two decade of the twentieth century, hundreds of Indian-themed "parlor songs, [...] operas, symphonies, and string quartets" were written as a way to explore musical "American-ness."[60]

Farwell founded the Wa-Wan Press to provide a venue for young composers and himself to publish their Indian-inspired compositions. He also held a series of lecture-recitals to talk about the "Music and Myth of the American Indians and Its Relation to American Composers," and perform his and others' adaptations. They relied on ethnographic sound recordings and musical transcriptions, including those collected by Alice Fletcher and Frances Densmore. His lectures, which he called "Indian Talks," quickly earned "wide and favorable" reviews from the press all across the country, and Cadman and other Indianist composers soon imitated the format.[61]

Farwell never went to the field to record Indian songs, but he relied instead on *The Omaha Indian Music* book written by Fletcher and La Flesche. La Flesche

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57. Alan Howard Levy, *Musical Nationalism: American Composers' Search for Identity*, Contributions in American Studies 66 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), 17.

58. Ibid., 17; Antonin Dvořák, "Music in America," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 90, no. 537 (February 1898): 433; Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 195.

59. Beth E. Levy, *Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2012), 26.

60. Tara Browner, "'Breathing the Indian Spirit': Thoughts on Musical Borrowing and the 'Indianist' Movement in American Music," *American Music* 15, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 273.

61. Farwell held his lecture-recitals in colleges, schools, churches, and clubs across the United States. Michael V. Pisani, *Imagining Native America in Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 177. By "Indianist" composers, I mean non-Indian composers who from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century attempted to adapt American Indian melodies to Western classical music. Some of major Indianist composers include Edward MacDowell, Arthur Farwell, and Charles Wakefield Cadman.

was therefore in part involved in Farwell's musical experiments.[62] Yet La Flesche had a particularly close intellectual collaboration with Cadman. Cadman was an American-born composer whose wider experiments in borrowing melodies from foreign sources included those of African America, Japan, and Cuba. Cadman, however, mostly worked on composing sentimental songs from Western folklore with romantic overtones about "vanishing" Indians.[63] La Flesche met Cadman during his years at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As many anthropologists did at that time, La Flesche provided ethnographic information he had as an Omaha Indian to assist Cadman to collect Indian melodies and to transcribe musical scores.

Cadman also included La Flesche in his Indian Music Talk. During these talks, Cadman explained the significance of Indian melodies and compared them to the music of great European master composers.[64] "The voice of love, sorrow, and the tragedy was the same with the Indian as the white man," Cadman claimed, and he showed it by comparing "an Omaha tribal melody with portions of the first movement in [a] Beethoven sonata" and another Indian song with Grieg's "Death of Ase."[65] A newspaper critic even praised the recital hall's decorations displaying "many beautiful specimens of Indian basket weaving [...] with other examples of the art and craft of the Indians."[66] Paul Kennedy Harper, a non-Indian vocalist, sang in the native tongue, "with the interpretation given by an Indian," who was possibly La Flesche.[67] During his talk Cadman also introduced Omaha tribal songs that La Flesche sang for him.[68]

III: Making his Indian Opera American

Acknowledging the success and popularity of Cadman's Indian Music Talk, La Flesche suggested Cadman compose an opera based on traditional Indian legends.[69] Cadman enthusiastically accepted La Flesche's idea. They thus soon

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62. Browner, "Breathing the Indian Spirit," 274–277.

63. Some of the Orientalist compositions of Cadman are: *Four American Indian Songs*, *To a Vanishing Race*, *Sayonara*, *Dark Dancers of Mardi Gras*, and *The Belle of Havana* to name a few.

64. "Cadman Concert Very Enjoyable," La Flesche Family Papers, Box 1, Series 3, Folder 2. Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS), Lincoln, NE.

65. "Indian Melody Pleases Crowd," La Flesche Family Papers, Box 1, Series 3, Folder 2. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

66. "Cadman Concert Very Enjoyable"

67. "Indian Music To Be Interpreted," La Flesche Family Papers, Box 1, Series 3, Folder 2. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

68. The songs that La Flesche sang were noted in the programs of Cadman's Indian Music Talks often with the notes to thank the contributors. La Flesche Family Papers, Box 1, Series 3, Folder 3. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

started to collect Indian melodies for the opera.[70] In the summer of 1909 at an Omaha reservation in Nebraska, La Flesche cooperated with Cadman to select and make recordings of Omaha songs.[71] He also worked on a libretto, collaborating with Nelle Richmond Eberhart, a Nebraska-born lyrist who had worked with Cadman and embodied Cadman's romantic Indianness into a musical text.

The story of their opera, called *Da-O-Ma*, was a romantic love story set in the early years of the nineteenth century, and involves two men in love with a daughter of a prominent man. La Flesche wrote the story based on the "legend of Omahas and the Ponkas," and Eberhart rearranged the story to conform his words to the music's meter and accent.[72]

As Cadman stated in a letter, in making an opera, La Flesche had a role as "the furnisher of the story in prose form" while Cadman was the composer and Eberhart was "the furnisher of THE LIBRETTO [sic] or lyric version."[73] Yet their letters suggest La Flesche did more than just furnish the story. Cadman often commented that ethnographic sound recordings were completely different from his idealized "Indian" composition. However, he still wanted to "make [the opera] as TRUE [sic] or ethnological as [he] can so that it will be truly Indian."[74] While accompanying La Flesche in his research trip to Omaha, Cadman played some of the melodies on the piano and asked La Flesche if he liked the melodies, and if he thought using them for the opera would be appropriate. Among those melodies they collected, Cadman included sixty-five songs for his opera production.[75]

Eberhart also relied on La Flesche's advice to make the libretto more "Indian." When La Flesche suggested revisions to the libretto, Eberhart was fascinated. "You have finally done what I've been wishing you would do," she wrote La Flesche, "given Indian expressions. I don't know where to turn to find them. I wish you would look over all the opera and notice where an Indian expression may be substituted for mine."[76] Moreover, when Cadman asked a

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69. Harry D. Perison, "The 'Indian' Operas of Charles Wakefield Cadman," *College Music Symposium* 22, no. 2 (Fall 1982): 22.

70. Ibid.

71. Charles Wakefield Cadman, "The 'Idealization' of Indian Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (July 1915): 393.

72. Green, *Iron Eye's Family*, 201.

73. Charles Cadman to Francis La Flesche. October 17. La Flesche Family Papers 1859−1939 (undated), Box 1, Series 1, Folder 2. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

74. Cadman to La Flesche, December 29, 1917. La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Series 1, Folder 1. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

75. "Music of Indians Called Curiosity: Charles Wakefield Cadman Says Red Skin's Melodies like Egyptians," La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Series 3, Folder 5. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

theatrical designer to design a miniature stage and draw illustrations for costumes and stage settings, Cadman noted a book by La Flesche and Fletcher as essential for providing distinctive Omaha design features.[77]

Despite the enthusiasm of La Flesche and his collaborators, unfortunately *Da-O-Ma* was never produced. The failure of other Indian-themed operas such as Walter McClintock's *Poia*, prevented *Da-O-Ma* from going into production. Cadman submitted the opera to the Boston Opera Company, the Chicago Opera Company, and the Metropolitan Opera Company but all rejected the production.[78] La Flesche seemingly never wanted to give up, and in 1922, almost eight years after they received the Metropolitan Opera's rejection, La Flesche enthusiastically wrote to Cadman, when he met the possible producer, Edouard Albion from the Washington National Opera Association: "Now! Charles Wakefield Cadman, Composer of the Four American Indian Songs, Opus No. 45, look at me.[...] in all seriousness, I think we had better accept Mr. Albion's offer to put the opera on the stage."[79] Nevertheless, *Da-O-Ma* was never produced.

Nevertheless, La Flesche continued to advise Cadman when the composer started working on a new opera, *Shanewis*. The story of *Shanewis* was based on the life of Tsianina Redfeather, the young Cherokee-Creek Indian soprano singer. Unlike *Da-O-Ma*, *Shanewis* dealt with a modern American Indian—Tsianina herself when American Indians had gradually adapted to Euro-American society.[80] Cadman and Eberhart sent a rough draft of *Shanewis* to La Flesche, asking for his advice.[81] Also, Cadman used La Flesche's recording of the Omaha ceremonial song directly for the Indian powwow scene.[82] La Flesche also seems to have assisted in providing suitable costumes and instruments for the stage as well. "We will promise that the things presented will have a real semblance of THE POSSIBLE [sic]," Cadman once wrote to La Flesche asking "whether [he was] able to get for [Cadman] [....] at least two rattles that [could] be used by four singers on the stage in the ceremonial song."[83]

With La Flesche's assistance, it seems that Cadman tried to present Indians as

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76. Nelle Eberhart to La Flesche. April 27, 1910. La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Series 1, Folder 1. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

77. Cadman to La Flesche. April 12, 19??. La Flesche Family Papers 1859–1939 (undated), Box 1, Series 1, Folder 2. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

78. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 597.

79. La Flesche to Cadman. July 26, 1922. La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Folder 1. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

80. Perison, "The 'Indian' Operas of Charles Wakefield Cadman," 37.

81. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 191.

82. "Native Shanewis and Place Congo Soon to be Seen—Cadman Calls His Work "American," Not Indian Opera," La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Series 3, Folder 2. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

83. Cadman to La Flesche, December 29, 1917.

"authentically" as possible also for his opera *Shanewis*. However, Cadman took a different perspective on *Shanewis* from *Da-O-Ma*, categorizing it as an "American" opera instead of an Indian opera, because the opera treated a modern Indian who was, in his words, in transition. Cadman noted that "more than three-fourth of the compositions of the work [lay] within the boundaries of original creative effort [....] [and] most of it is not built on native tunes in any way."[84] Throughout *Shanewis*, he emphasized American-ness based on "civilized" Indians and his Indian-inspired harmonies.

Shanewis treated the main character as an Indian maiden conforming to Euro-American civilization and thus most of the melodies were built upon Cadman's imagined Indianness. This made it by all means an "American" work for Cadman. He insisted that he worked hard on the opera "to have [his] opera put on AS [HE] WANTED IT[sic] and as nearly American in appearance as the story and stage action called for" and he chose the actor "to give the American audience an idea of what THEY[sic] think OUGHT[sic] to be such a character."[85] Stage settings of a powwow scene with "Ford automobiles, red, white, and blue blunting, lemonade and ice cream" intermingled with Indian traditions already represented Cadman's faith in making American opera, and reviewers considered the opera uniquely American.[86] The Metropolitan Opera produced *Shanewis* for two consecutive seasons (1918 and 1919), being the first "American opera" the Met produced beyond one season.[87]

IV: Cadman's Superiority and La Flesche's Authority

Cadman could not escape from supremacist beliefs that he was the one who had salvaged and idealized American Indian songs into enjoyable melodies. Cadman claimed that "[v]ery often [American Indian songs] are not even melodies until after the adapter has given them form, symmetry, and rhythmical cohesion," and he continued that without his own revisions, they would have remained in a "musty blanket."[88] Hence, La Flesche's work with composers like Cadman may have confirmed Euro-Americans' racial superiority over American Indians. By providing "authentic" materials and his "authentic" perspective as an Indian, La Flesche was thus walking a thin line. While attempting to alter dominant misconceptions about Indians, at the same time he was actually enhancing those misconceptions.[89] Nevertheless, Cadman recognized Indian

84. "Native Shanewis and Place Congo Soon to be Seen"

85. Ibid.

86. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 185.

87. Ibid., 184; Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 109.

88. Variations. *The Musical Courier*, 21. La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Series 3, Folder 1. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

culture as "a part of our national heritage and history" and saw "no reason why their simple folk utterances should not lend color to [American national music]."[90] At any rate, Cadman regarded himself as a savior of Indian melodies and Indian music as essential to give "American" character to American national music.

Despite Cadman's supposed superiority, La Flesche's collaboration and support were essential for his Indianist compositions.[91] Because La Flesche was frequently noted in the newspapers as the son of an Omaha chief, his collaboration itself already provided an "authentic" touch to Cadman's music. When the newspaper articles covered Cadman's Indian Talk, for example, they included La Flesche's name and his tribal affiliation. In an article entitled "Crowd Hears Indian Music," for instance, La Flesche was described as "an Indian, who has a government position in Washington. The Indian's father is chief of the Omaha reservation."[92] Also, the program of Cadman's Indian Music Talk mentioned La Flesche giving "unqualified approval" as a son of Chief Joseph of the Omaha Indians to Harper's performance of the "Omaha Tribal Prayer."[93] These examples indicate that La Flesche's assistance and his presence on the stage itself confirmed the "authenticity" of Cadman's music, and this would attract more attention when Americans were craving some "real" experience in the midst of their modern, artificial urban lives.[94] Cadman thus needed La Flesche's knowledge and his Indianness.

La Flesche himself also challenged Cadman's superiority by hiring Cadman as his assistant to work on transcriptions for his Osage research.[95] Moreover, La Flesche boldly insisted on his authority over Cadman, when Cadman took all the

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89. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 126; Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race and Reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 4.

90. "Home Talent Gets Its Innings at Last," *The New York Times*, March 17, 1918.

91. As I have illustrated, Cadman needed La Flesche's assistance to record, transcribe, and select Omaha melodies. Also, while Cadman and La Flesche did not collaborate much in their later years, Cadman needed Tsianina Redfeather, Cherokee/Creek singer to sing his songs, performing as an Indian princess to sell his songs, giving "authenticity" to his music.

92. "Crowd Hears Indian Music: Melodies of the Redskin Enjoyed by Audience at Y.M. C.A.," La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Folder 5. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

93. Cadman's brochure preserved in Arthur Farwell Collection Scrapbook cited in Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 37.

94. I acknowledge Levy's observation that Cadman was reluctant to rely on La Flesche's and other ethnographers' instructions and recordings solely for his compositions. Since he knew that there was "a great gulf between creativity and anthropology," he was trying to balance out his idealization and "authentic" materials. However, my reading of newspaper articles on his Indian Talk led my understanding that regardless of Cadman's distress about this gap, his audience expected something "authentic" from his Indian Talk, and he needed La Flesche and other ethnographer's cooperation to make his Talk trustworthy to discriminating audience, including the newspaper reporters. Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 91.

95. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 191.

credit for securing the song that La Flesche actually obtained with the participant's consent.[96] When *The Christian Science Monitor* gave Cadman praise for securing Wa-Xo-be songs from Saucy Calf, La Flesche enclosed the clipping of the newsletter and demanded Cadman correct the misstatement. "Now Mr. Cadman, may I ask if this is your own statement or if you authorized it to be made?" La Flesche demanded. "If the statement is not true and was not in any way, authorized by you, should you not, in justice to yourself and the one who really did secure the songs, correct the misstatement?"[97] In response, Cadman defended himself, but he did write the editor asking for correction.[98] After this trouble, Cadman and La Flesche never worked together on fieldwork.[99] Yet La Flesche's employment of Cadman for his research on Osage Indians and his daring reclaiming of his authority over the recording suggest that La Flesche transcended his status as Cadman's devoted assistant. Instead he challenged Cadman's position as the "savior" of Indian melodies by clarifying his own rights as an expert of Osage Indians.[100]

By collaborating with and assisting Cadman, La Flesche attempted to insert American Indian contributions to the making of American national music. "We are told," La Flesche wrote, "that [Native America] has no contribution to the world's thought or the world's pleasure, nothing to articulate with [Old World] lines of culture, nothing to gladden the heart of man and cause it to thrill under the unifying touch of a common nature. Never-the-less[...] the folk were here, living their story and singing their song."[101] Until his death in 1932, La Flesche worked tirelessly to collect, research, and write about Omaha and Osage Indians. As a "civilized" Indian who was educated in the mission school, La Flesche gained the means to instruct his Euro-American collaborators. He played upon the expectations of Cadman and Eberhart and assisted them with his knowledge, actively participating in making their Indian operas. By satisfying Cadman's and even his audiences' craving for "Indian authenticity," and by insisting on his status as an ethnologist, he gained authority over Cadman and Eberhart as a

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96. Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 103.

97. La Flesche to Cadman, May 18, 1911. La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Folder 1. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

98. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 596.

99. Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 103.

100. This is not to suggest that La Flesche, as an Omaha Indian, was the only one qualified to talk about his own culture and Cadman should have been silent. It is instead to say that La Flesche made clear that Cadman could never take advantage of him by getting credit solely for recording ceremonial song. As an ethnologist and as the person who actually secured the song, he claimed his own right to clarify the mistake made in the magazine article.

101. La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, xii.; on the scrap paper in La Flesche's files. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers, NAA, Suitland, MD; Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 597.

provider of indigenous musical knowledge. In so doing, La Flesche helped Indianize American national music, thus placing American Indians at the center of American identity.

Conclusion

On the occasion of La Flesche's visit to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for a conference with Cadman and Eberhart, one newspaper celebrated La Flesche as a "full-blood" Indian who contributed to developing American Indian music: "Francis La Flesche, an Omaha Indian of pure extraction[....] who is famous as an ethnologist and as author of a very well-known story of reservation school.... has done more for the advancement of Indian music than any member of his race in America."[102] The newspaper continued to speak highly of La Flesche for "know [ing] and sing [ing] over 600 tribal melodies," being "veritable storehouse of Indian facts and fancies," and most of all, being "a most valued member of his tribe[....] [as] [t]he son of Estanza[sic] [...] logical successor to the office should he care to accept it."[103] By describing La Flesche as a "full-blood" and "logical successor to his father," this article is factually inaccurate. However, it clearly demonstrates La Flesche's success in making his audience consider his opinions as a valuable source of "authenticity." By playing the "civilized" Indian, and playing upon people's cravings for "authenticity," La Flesche negotiated with Euro-American composers to navigate Indianness and Americanness under his own terms.

Throughout his career as an ethnologist, La Flesche vigorously worked to counter dominant perceptions that saw American Indians as an "inferior" other. He successfully accommodated into the mainstream society. Moreover, by recording songs used in Omaha and Osage rituals and collaborating with Cadman, La Flesche demonstrated that American Indians could provide the unique sound and identity for American music. This made them more than curiosities. La Flesche helped put Indians at the center of what it meant to be American.

Another obituary published in *The New York Times* depicted La Flesche as an "Indian leader who played the white man's game and won," for winning "distinction as an ethnologist and recorder of the vanishing culture of his people."[104] La Flesche, who lived the turn of the twentieth century carefully read what his audience expected of him, and manipulated this expectation. In so

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102. "Scholarly Indian Tells Of Tribe's Music Wonders: Expert on Indian Affairs, Himself an Omaha Indian, Confers With Pittsburg Composers of Aboriginal Melodies—Knows Hundreds of Tribal Songs," La Flesche Family Papers. Box 1, Series 3, Folder 2. NSHS, Lincoln, NE.

103. Ibid.

104. "Indian Feast Marks La Flesche Burial," *The New York Times*, September 10, 1932.

doing, La Flesche succeeded in taking control of American composers eager to learn about American Indians, and used that opportunity to reclaim his own version of Indianness and Americanness.